



University of East Anglia

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05 September 2018

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_18-199)

We have now considered your request of 17 August 2018 for the following information:

‘Revised versions of documents under discussion that include any actions or changes resulting from discussions in two meetings that occurred on 21 October 2017 and 04 December 2017’

The final document which includes any actions or changes from these discussions is the ‘Proposal for Replacement for DSA Accommodation Payments’. This has been included on pages 3 – 6. We can confirm there are no other documents still held relating to this matter.

On this occasion, it is not possible to provide all the requested information. The Act contains a number of exemptions that allow public authorities to withhold certain information from release. We have applied the following exemption to part of your request.

Exemption	Reason
s.40(2), Personal information	Disclosure of information would be contrary to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation

Exemption Explanation

In line with s.40(2) of the Act we have removed from the document the name and role of a member of Student Union staff. We believe that information identifying this person consist of their personal data, as defined by Article 4(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We believe that disclosure of the information would be contrary to the requirements of Article 5(1)(a) of the GDPR; namely that information must be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject. These individuals would have no expectation that this information would be made publicly available, and we have not identified a lawful basis that would allow or require us to disclose this information.

Where information has been removed from the document in accordance with s.40(2), we have replaced the text with a black rectangle.

We hope this information will meet your requirements, however if you are not satisfied you have the right of appeal. If you wish to appeal, please set out in writing your reasons for appealing and send to the above address. You must appeal within 60 calendar days of the date of this letter. Any appeal received after that date will not be considered nor acknowledged. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

You also have a subsequent right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. Further information is available on their website:

https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us, or by telephone on 0303 123 1113.

Please note that any material over which UEA has copyright is released on the understanding that you will comply with all relevant copyright rules regarding reproduction and/or transmission of the information provided.

Please quote our reference given at the head of this letter in all correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Palmer
Information Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia

Proposal for Replacement for DSA Accommodation Payments

Following changes to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), during the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years qualifying students can no longer seek funding towards their accommodation if it is provided directly by their Higher Education Providers (HEP):

“ACCOMMODATION

DSA funding is no longer available for additional accommodation costs in instances where the accommodation is provided, managed or controlled by the institution or its agent.

If, at the time of the NAR, details of the student’s accommodation are available, then this should be provided in the report.

If Needs Assessors are able to establish that the accommodation which the student has selected is owned by the HEP or their agent, then a recommendation should not be made for DSA funding in that year.

As is current practice, DSAs can only be used in circumstances where other nonspecialist accommodation in the same block of accommodation/locality is available to allow SFE to determine the reasonable additional cost.”

(From Student Loans Company DSA 16/17 Policy Changes Reference Guide)

These changes oblige the HEP to make assessment of their own provision of an equivalent of this funding as per the Equality Act 2010:

“2.1 The Equality Act

As independent and autonomous bodies, institutions are entirely responsible for addressing any issues of discrimination that might come to their attention. The Government provides a legal framework for individuals, which protects their right not to be discriminated against – primarily through the Equality Act 2010. Institutions are prohibited by law, through the Equality Act 2010, from discrimination against students with protected characteristics which includes disability.

Under the Equality Act 2010 institutions have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people to ensure they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled students.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments comprises three requirements:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with those who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

- Where a physical feature puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage or adopt a reasonable alternative method of providing the service or exercising the function.
- Where not providing an auxiliary aid or service puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with students who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to provide that auxiliary aid/service.

The duty to make adjustments arises where a provision, criterion or practice, a physical feature or the absence of an auxiliary aid or service puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with students who are not disabled.”

(from <http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/1512/dsa-new-students.pdf>)

Student Support Services and UEASU have been discussing the provision of the replacement payment, the related processes as well as improving the accommodation related information available to both prospective and current students.

The outcome of these discussions are as follows:

- Two levels of discounted accommodation fees are to be applied
 1. Proposed discount for students with an evidenced need for an En Suite room

This equates to the difference in price between a weighted average price of the Standard Single rooms and the price of an En Suite Village room provided by UEA.

No. of nights	Daily Discount	Amount to credit
268	£2.92	£782.56

Daily Rate	
Average Standard Single	£14.54
En Suite Village	£17.46
Difference	£2.92
% Rent discounted	17%

2. Proposed discount for students with an evidenced need for an En Suite room on campus

This equates to the difference in price between a weighted average price of the Standard Single rooms and the price of an En Suite Campus room provided by UEA.

No. of nights	Daily Discount	Amount to credit
268	£5.83	£1,562.44

Daily Rate	
Average Standard Single	£14.54
En Suite Campus	£20.37
Difference	£5.83
% Rent discounted	29%

The following points have also been agreed:

- Students are to be invited to make an application for the discount (unless it has been applied in a previous year and in which case it will be applied automatically)
- The application will be made via an electronic form which should take into account all of the usual visual accessibility criteria
- Eligibility for the discount will be determined in most instances by information already held within SSS:
 1. A Needs Assessment Report (NAR)
 2. SSS Records
 3. UMS Medical Documentation
 4. Some situations will be self-evident e.g. wheelchair user
- For the avoidance of confusion, as a principle, we should not be requiring students to re-submit information already held by the university
- It should be made clear what the information in the form will be used for, who by and where it will be stored

- The discount will be applied in the form of a reduced rent level negating the need to apply a refund or for students to wait for it to be applied
- Students with a pre-determined need will have their accommodation discount applied retrospectively i.e. the eight students who had the discount applied in the 2016/17 academic year
- To achieve the aim of publicising the revised process it will be incorporated into the launch of the new accommodation webpage for students with disabilities and medical conditions
- This will be launched in December or January depending on date of completion
- The group will be invite to comment on and make input to the content of the webpage before the launch
- To publicity of the launch of this new page will take the form of:
 1. An announcement on the Portal
 2. Both Staff and Student Bulletin
 3. Student Accommodation Bulletin
 4. Staff briefing (SSS & UEASU)
 5. Information sheet/card
- [REDACTED] advises [REDACTED] would anticipate that around 70 students would be eligible for discounted rent
- DSA provision currently remains in place for eligible students for other education related needs
- There was a useful discussion around flagging other potential areas in which UEA may be affected by future changes to DSA provision